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IE MYSTIC LINE
ND OTHER RHYMES

FRED HOVEY ALLEN

The Mystic Line And Other Rhymes

BY

FRED HOVEY ALLEN

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Gift
Brodie S. Higley
Nov. 16, 1921

To

MY WIFE

WHO HAS CHERISHED THESE FRAGMENTS OF A BUSY LIFE AND AT WHOSE REQUEST THEY ARE GATHERED HERE, THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

I shrink from the oblivion of the grave. It is my wish that a modest volume containing some thought of mine might lie upon the table at bright firesides which I have loved, when I have passed from sight, thus to continue for a time a recollection in the hearts of those I have known so well.

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The Mystic Line and Other Rhymes

An Old Sweet Song

I hear the echo of an old sweet song,
Sung long ago;
It billows o'er the past like silver mist,
Or bells rung low.

I scent the perfumed dew like violet's breath,
After the rain;
The echo and the fragrance wake on memory's harp
The old refrain.

The curtains fall apart in golden west;
The sun sinks low;
I feel again the charm of rest from songs
Sung long ago.

Greeting

Wherever you are
May each morn unbar
Some glory of love
From the Father above,
Some sweetness of friends who are true;
May the hours keep time
To the heart's deep chime
As you pass from the old to the new.

The Mystic Line

I stood beside the chafing sea,
As white winged ships came gaily down
With rich and costly gifts to me,
From hardy sailors, strong and brown.

I watched the billows rise and fall,
'Till tangled in the setting sun
They sang of mystery and peace
Beyond where sea and sky are one.

O! sailor from the unknown sea,
What lies beyond that mystic line?
He whispered, "Rest, Eternal peace,
Sail outward, they are thine."

I called my white winged ships to me,
Hope hung her flag upon the mast,
Faith, as the pilot took the wheel,
And we sped west-ward fast.

The sea rose up to meet the sky;
The sky bent down to kiss the sea;
As toward their far embrace I fly,
They wave inviting arms to me.

By day, by night I sail and sail!
Each dawn, I say will bring me rest,
Each night I dream that I have found
That holy peace, that golden West.

And still I sail the deepening sea,
The mystic line burns in the west,
The heart still waits for perfect peace,
The weary feet, eternal rest.

My Little Girl and I

We've crossed the Divide on the middle of life,
My little girl and I.
We've had our share in the calm and the strife
With the travelers trudging by,
Tho' oft on our pathway the shadows were rife
There is light in the western sky.

Of losses and crosses enough we have had,
My little girl and I;
But, bless you, we never had time to be sad,
Or pause in our work to sigh
And when trouble came we were not so mad
As to sit us down and cry.

To the weak and the weary we sang a song,
My little girl and I,
To lighten the burden when days were long,
We talked of a by and by;
And therefore they who imagined us wrong
Never cost us a single sigh.

We must lodge at the sign of the grave one day,
My little girl and I;
'Tis a comfortless inn, we have heard men say
But a palace we own hard by;—
From its welcome no wanderer goeth away,
'Tis the Father's House on High.

Silent Town

A mile beyond where the sun goes down
Lies the mystical isle of dreams;
Where the gossamer webs of Silent Town
Are fashioned in spectral seams.

And the threads which are woven in silent
town
Are spun in the echoing brain
From the zephyr of sleep; by the hand of a
clown
And a tragic, ephemeral train.

There are bright threads woven of yester-year
On the looms of that silent town,
They are twined with the vision of things to
come
Just beyond where the sun goes down.

A mile beyond where the sun goes down
Is the shore of a dream-lit sea,
As I wander there when the tide has flown,
My sweetest dream is of thee,

But the dream is shattered in silent town,
For the day calls strong and free,
But a mile beyond where the sun goes down
I know thou wilt wait for me.

My Castle

I builded me a castle,
True, 'twas air,
I watched it rise,
'Till, shimmering in the sun, its turrets fair
Pierced to the skies.

In beauty, passing fair,
When day was done,
Its gilded spires
Glowed, touched o'er with molten cloud and sun,
From heavenly fires.

But it was only air,
Love's phantom theme
Too bright to trust,
And so, my fairy castle like a dream
Crumbled to dust.

Love tenderly yet enfolds
That castle ruin
That delusive dream,
Still, memories of the happy "might have been"
Upon me gleam.

I will not vail the shadows
Sorrow teeming,
Nor will forget;
Perhaps some lesson from the old sweet dreaming,
I still may get.

But why should manhood yet despair
Though all his castles
Lie in the dust?

Though thickly strewn the way with wreck of battle,
I'll wait and trust.

Nobody

I'm thinking just now of,—nobody,
And all that nobody's done;
For I have a passion for,—nobody,
That nobody else would own.

In life's tender morning,—nobody,
To me was loving and dear;
My cradle was rocked by,—nobody,
And nobody ever was near.

I played in the street with,—nobody,
And nobody brought me up,
And when I was hungry,—nobody
Gave me to dine and sup.

I went to school to,—nobody,
And nobody taught me to read,
I recounted my tale to,—nobody
And nobody ever gave heed.

So I trudged along with,—nobody,
And said,—nobody I'd be,
I asked to marry,—nobody
And nobody married me.

Then, here's a health to,—nobody,
For nobody is now in town,
And I sing to the praise of,—nobody
As nobody else has sung.

The Kingdom Under the Ground

'Tis a mighty realm you hold, old King,—
Your kingdom under the ground;
Each day doth a thousand subjects bring,
Each hour art thou newly crowned.

Thy chambers are dark and damp thy halls,
Their walls have a look of decay,
While around them the death-watch creeps and
crawls
And the will-o'-the-wisp lights play.

Thine is a varied court, old king,
'Tis gathered from every age!
The peasant, the peer, the lordly king,
The fool, and the reverend sage.

Thou holdest court in silence grim
And thy corridors, damp and long,
Ne'er sound with choral, chant or hymn
Nor burst of festal song.

The traveler, journeying to thy land,
Must cross a turbid stream,

And he passes out from our sunlit strand
In a deep, forgetful dream.

His dream is unbroken still we know,
While the feet of the ages creep,
He heeds not the storms of life below
Where the pulses are touched in sleep.

Rule well, old king, in thy dismal realm,—
In thy kingdom under the ground,
For a mightier power shall break thy spell
When the last great trump shall sound.

In Summer Time

"'Tis now the gorgeous summer time,
And all the days are filled with rhyme,
And all the forest dells a-chime,
And choral halls, like lover's clime,
Replete with wandering scents of thyme."

H. F. Vanderlyn

The glad hours linger, midst perfume,
To toy with Flora, where she dwells
A queen, enthroned in fragrant dells
And in the landscape's drowsy blooms.

They woo and wonder all the day,
With sunbeams, in whose mystic loom
The breezes weave the crown of June,
The rosy favored child of May.

Above are slopes of wooded hill,
  Whose green waves roll with ceaseless sigh,
  And bald crests melt into the sky,
With music of swift, dashing rills.

Amidst the storm and summer-shine
  Their grey-grown rocks like sentries stand,
  O'er girding the fierce mountain land,
And all their glory, Dear, is thine.

To My Brother Frank on His Wedding Day

'Tis well to woo, 'tis well to wed,
  For so the world hath done,
Since roses grew and soft winds blew
  And morning brought the sun.
The sons of Adam ne'er forget
  Their single state to leave,
And count it happiness to get
  A loving, faithful Eve.

And 'tis not strange, since for each
  Kind nature formed a plan,
For with true instinct, she doth teach
  What woman is to man.

Each without each, lives half a life;
Together, life's sublime;
Unfraught with jealousy or strife,
A living, breathing rhyme.

Much must be borne, and much forborne,
Much loved, and much forgiven;
Many the suffering prayer alone,
Before the bar of heaven.
Each first in strife must conquer self;
Then, each may conquer each,
Each heart subdue its vicious elf,
Then each is fit to teach.

Learning life's lesson thus, 'twill be
A mutual summit gained;
A beacon light, by which to see
The goal to be attained,
Then passing early from the shore,
Or, lingering on the strand,
The golden chain of love is held,
Fast in the spirit land.

Father, Take Me

If I never find repose
While on earth my stay shall be,
Then, when gently comes life's close,
Father, take me.

Wild distress, or gnawing care,
  Driving storm, or restless sea,
I no more the stress may bear,
  Father, take me.

All my earthly toils are done,
  Wandering feet aweary be,
Time and life alike are run,
  Father, take me.

Some Day,——

Some day will fall the heavy load,
  And we shall reach the sunset tree;
Some day will end the weary road,
  And we shall sail the silent sea;

Some day, a backward glance will show
  The wayward journey we have come;
Some day we'll only wonder how
  We've reached, through all, the quiet home.

Some day among the islands blest,
  We'll wonder why we fumed and fought;
Some day we'll learn that love is rest,
  Recall and claim the things forgot.

Night on the Grand Canal

We are out on the liquid pathway,
  Where the sea and the sky seem one,
And the flame-bright wing of his setting
  Broods over the sunken sun.

Above us the night stars thicken,—
  And the moon glows, round and red;
Beneath us the shimmering waters
  Tell of a day-light dead.

From many a phantom galley
  Which through the waters glide,
Come rich, entrancing melodies
  O'er the tender, pulsing tide.

Bell unto bell is calling,
  And Adrian's billows hear;
And toss their glad antiphonal
  Through the crystal atmosphere.

There are twinkling stars above us,
  There are dimpling stars below;
We glide on an opal pathway
  As the evening shadows grow.

We float 'neath heavenly places,
  Reflected back in the stream;
Through towers and domes inverted,
  Like a city of fabled dream.

Just a Thought Immortal

Will it be so, when I am dead?
When lips are silent and hands are cold?
That a thought wrought out on a summer's day
May grow into power through the years untold?

Just a thought immortal on page or stone,
That found its birth through travail of soul,
And was nourished unknown, till it sprang into power
On the sculptured stone, or the papyri roll?

A dear, dread truth;—a ghastly train
Follows the silent steps of the dead;
Spectres of deeds for good or for ill,
The thought unspoken,—the words unsaid.

Could I but live, that all my thought,
Graven on marble, or traced in line,
A beacon should stand for those who seek,
Winning their feet into heights sublime.

What Is Death to the Christian?

'Tis only taking the helmet off
And laying aside the shield;

'Tis only putting the sword away,
And leaving the battlefield.

'Tis only coming home from school,
When the lessons all are learned;
'Tis sitting at rest by the wayside,
When the sun from the sky has burned.

'Tis only falling asleep,
When the hard day's work is done;
'Tis only to wake in the morning
By the side of the great white throne.

'Tis only casting the anchor
Till the storms of life are o'er;
'Tis only laying down the cross,
To open the palace door.

'Tis only climbing the mountain
For a gleam of the promised land;
'Tis only crossing the Jordan
For a touch of the pierced hand.

'Tis changing the evening twilight
That darkens the way we've trod,
For the glorious morning sunlight
That burns on the hills of God.

God and Me

The motto of the Carmelite Monks: "At Carmel and at Death,—God and Me."

At Carmel and at death, the same;
I know, at last, 'tis God and Me.
I breathe in peace the hallowed name,
The answer falls, "I am with thee."

When I shall stand upon the shore,
To launch my bark on death's wild sea,
Tho' dark and loud the surges roar,
No harm can come to God and me.

Past pearly gates, o'er sunfilled hills,
Or by the shore of tideless sea,
One raptured thought the spirit fills,
Here and forever, God and me.

Sometime

Sometime or other dark days must come,
Pitiless days of doubt and pain,
Mists and storms on the sunny hills;
Cold rains sobbing against the pane.

Sometime or other, the changing years,
Throwing the mystical veil away,
Will change the heart-aches and griefs and fears
Into the soul's glad freedom day.

Sometimes I long for the golden days
When I gaily played 'neath the old roof tree;
Is there a land where the sunshine drops,
Soft as the old sky used to be?

Sometimes I long for the bonnie eyes,
Laughing their love into mine each day,
But out in the darkness desolate,
One from the sunshine went away.

Sometime or other, perhaps, there will come
Purple gleams in the Autumn sky,
October sunshine, song of birds;
Indian Summer by and by?

Home Revisited

I'm home again to-night, dear Tom,
In early childhood scenes,
'Neath the dear old mossy cottage roof
With its quaint old oaken beams.

The walls are still unplastered, Tom,
  But the firelight plays, I ween,
As bright as when we played, dear Tom,
  By its clear and silvery sheen.

The rain is falling, too, dear Tom,
  With just the soft refrain,
It played upon the shingles, Tom,
  In days far up the main.

The cricket sings in the hearth, Tom,
  The same bright note of glee;
To him life's all the same, Tom,
  But not to you and me.—

For the wrinkles that mark the brow, Tom,
  And the frost on the curling hair,
Both tell of the world's fierce strife, Tom,
  And its endless toil and care.

I went alone to the brook, Tom,
  To the tree where we used to swing;
But the tree and the names we cut are gone,
  And the brook forgot to sing.

The shadows grow on the hearth, Tom!
  A mystical, twilight shade;
And I fain would rest with our loved ones, Tom,
  As they sleep on the spot where we played.

Dreaming

I am wandering out in a dreamy land,
Which borders a beautiful river;
Fair objects before and around me stand
And beckon me on with a fairy hand,
To the shades of the beautiful river.

As I listen, murmurs of long ago
Down through the dry reeds quiver;
Their bright notes changed to a wail of woe
Which melt on my burning heart like snow,
And blend with the beautiful river.

But the river now runs through dry, brown banks,
Where the scorching sun rays quiver,
Far up the stream is a youth sublime,
Whose freshness I thought would out-live time,
On the banks of the beautiful river.

For love was queen on that morn in May;
And we walked by the beautiful river;
And all was fair that the sun shone on,
For she gave me her heart as we walked alone,
Where now the dry reeds shiver.

But the river has brought us swiftly by,
And lost is the golden quiver

Which held the arrows which love had made,
And I think they were lost in a sombre shade
Which fell on the beautiful river.

And the shadow still lies on the darkened heart;
And wild is the beautiful river;—
I had rather been wrecked in the rapids just passed
Than struggle along if the shadow must cast
Its blight on the beautiful river.

A Fragment

Have you ever felt the silence
Of the morning on the hills?
Have you ever caught the rapture
Of the laughing, dancing rill?

Have you ever watched the sun rise
From the mountain's highest sod
And felt the soul uplifted to
The very throne of God?

Have you ever seen the sunset
Fill the air with flecks of gold,
Till an amber robe of glory
Did the drowsy world enfold?

Impromptu

On Presenting a Broom to the Bride of My Brother Frank at Their Wedding Ceremony

I bring no gem from India's mine,
No pearls from out the sea,
No diamond flashes in my hand,
No wealth I bring to thee.

I bring no thing, with silvered face,
No shrine at which to kneel,
Nothing that moth or rust will eat,
Or thieves break through to steal.

But since all friends that gather here
Some present now must leave,
I bring a choice domestic plant
Quite useful, I believe.

This end, you'll find a useful thing
To move about the floor,
To gather up the little crumbs,
The puppy can't devour.

This end, of little sterner stuff,
When storms beset your path,
You'll find a striking argument
To move your t'other half.

And when the little chickens come,
The fruit of being wed,
You'll find it very excellent
To hit 'em on the head.

And when old time has cut the last
Of all your earthly stitches,
Just scrabble on astride of it
And off to join the witches.

In the Cathedral

Through the chancel, quaint and olden,
Touching choir and pulpit stair,
Streamed the evening sunlight golden
In the ancient minster there.

Sweet the solemn anthem soared,
Ringing through the long defiles,
Note on note and word on word,
Echoing midst the ancient aisles.

And the preacher's tones at length
Swelled above the lofty nave,
Rolled in concert, gathering strength,
Like a sea-hymn in a cave.

Echoing from the walls around,
Psalm and prayer and lesson given,
Psalm and prayer in sweet rebound,
Passed, or seemed to pass, to heaven.

At Sea

Night falls upon the restless deep,
Our steel prow parts the phosphor glow,
While silver flash of spray reveals
The seething, yielding path below.

We hear the ocean's storm-strung harp;
Touched by the sea-king's fingers light,
While winds through all the throbbing strings
Pour forth their psalm upon the night.

Like sculptured hills the waves arise,
And then, like melting mountains fall;
'Till rushing down in clamorous might,
They wrap us in their vapory pall.

And still the burning heart beats on;
Through storm and night; o'er trackless foam,
'Till, through the waning mists of night,
The searching eyes discern their home.

For a Silver Wedding

While friends have come with joyful smile,
  Also, their glad tears shedding;
I say (without a thought of guile)
I wonder greatly all the while,
  To see a silver wedding.

Just think of all the weary years
  Two people can be treading,
A pathway lined with doubts and fears;
Perhaps through sorrow's vale of tears
  Up to a silver wedding.

You've had a man upon your hands:—
  Now called a self-beheading;
His crazy notions and demands;
His "this" and "that"—his buttons, bands;
  'Till there's a silver wedding.

We note that upon his hair,
  Time's silver flakes are spreading,
Some wonder at his youthful air;
I wonder that he still is there,
  To have a silver wedding.

Well, well, if young folks only knew:—
  But matrimony's spreading;

I doubt not, friends, that all of you
Are hoping ere your lives are through,
To have a silver wedding.

We all may wish for thou, and thee,
Beyond your silver wedding,
That patience's perfect work may be,
So far fulfilled that you may see,
A day as fair as this to be,
Your sweet, bright, golden wedding.

For a Golden Wedding

Bring them a nobler thread,
The nuptial cord is old,
'Tis fifty years since they were wed,
Bring them a chain of gold.

Bid them repeat the words,
In gentle tones and slow,
The covenant by angels heard,
Just fifty years ago.

No snowy bridal wreath
Befits the matron's brow,
No roses, pale with summer's breath
Bring autumn fruitage now.

Pray that the gracious hand
Still guide them as they go,
Till their feet shall stand
On the golden strand,
Beyond the Jordan's flow.

Thick mists may trouble the hills
And the mountains you have passed;
Tramping of storms and of night,
But you've pierced the gloom at last,
The shadows are thrilling with silver tints,
And day at a golden sunset hints.

So, at last about your feet,
The warm, sweet sunshine glows,
And step by step as you pass,
The glory fuller grows,
The jewels which glisten in love's deep mint
Throw over the sunset their golden glint.

And flowers at last will spring,
By the dreariest, dustiest way,
And a golden radiance fling
Its peace o'er the setting day,
The shadows are fleeing—the golden tint
Hath woven its jewels from love's deep mint.

Memories

How oft as night her mantle spreads
And gently pins it with a star,
In a half mournful, sleepless mood
Our roving memories reach afar.

They bring the days that are no more,
The scenes we loved in times gone by—
Those hallowed things we prized the most,
The first to fade, the first to die.

Yet farther back, to childhood's hour,
To birch, to bench, to ferule true,
The teacher's stern forbidding face,
The tedious lessons, stumbled through—

The brook that turned the noisy mill,
The minnow caught upon a pin,
The "old Brown Cottage," 'neath the hill,
The trundle bed we slumbered in.

How great the change that now appears,
Since the bright days when we were young!
Reflected through the mists of years,
How brightly beams our childhood's sun.

Childhood is past, and still we stand,
Amid the world's fierce, angry strife,
And with a bold, unflinching hand,
Fight out the unequal war of life.

Often as twilight veils the sky,
  Long troops of memories gather still,
And with sweet sadness, tinge they all
  Our weary journey down the hill.

. . . . .

Things that are fairest droop and ide,
  Forgetfulness will seal them up
Save where affection twines the wreath
  To fill sweet memory's waiting cup.

A Prayer

O! Jesus, source of love and light,
    Saviour Divine,
Lead us, we pray, to know thy truth,
    To do thy will,
    To keep thy way.

O! Holy Spirit, cleansing power,
    Give us thy light,
In us abound, till sin-touched hearts
    And self-stained souls
    In life are found.

A Fragment

The warm spring-time beameth
  Within thy fair cheek's glow,

Upon thy heart there lieth
The chill of winter's snow.

. . . . .

But now the summer burneth,
O dear, beloved of mine,
Thy cheek hath caught its splendor,
Thy heart its love divine.

To My Friends

Written for a special occasion, on receipt of a request signed by several hundred persons asking me to continue the pastorate which I was resigning in Rockland after a service of seven years.

A garland of flowers was borne to me
With the breath of pine and the scent of sea;
On a sun-filled cloud they were borne to me.

Their roots have never been kissed by mold,
Their petals are filled with sun-touched gold;
Their beauty is rare; their wealth untold.

They grew out on earth, nor hill, nor lea;
With their breath of pine and the wild sweet bee,
In a love-filled clime they were nursed for me.

Their petals can never know decay,
Nor will they vanish in mists away;
They will form a wreath for the crown of day
As he dies at last on his couch of gray.

Would you breathe with me the fragrance rare
That is wafted in on the sun-set air?
Would you linger for aye in my garden fair?
Then take my hand and walk with me,
Through the waning days, to the outer sea,
And we'll live with the flowers that were borne
to me
On the breath of pine and the scent of sea,
In the hearts of friends who were true to me.

Shadows

I am glad the service is ended,
Still gladder the day is done,
For I've lived so long in the shadow,
I cannot bear the sun.

It may gild with its amber glory
Each nook and flower and tree,
But sitting here 'tis only
A shadow that falls on me.

And ever and ever I'm praying
Its setting may be ere noon;
And the saddest part of the story is,
It cannot set too soon.

How little men reck of the battle,
If it be lost, or won,
This battle we fight in the shadow
Untouched by the shining sun.

There are many of you who listen
To the singer while he sings,
But how many feel the sorrow,—
Of song, the secret springs.

There are many of you to stay here,
There is only one to go,—
But the day is so long till night-fall,
And the night is so full of woe;—

Oh! how glad of the deeper shadows,
How glad when the play is done,
And the sombre curtain stretches,
'Twixt me and the garish sun.

For, better the night, and the darkness,
The winds and their tears of rain,
Than shadows which fall from a sunlight
Whose slightest touch is pain.

Cheer Up

The clouds are not always flying,
The rain does not always fall,
The winds are not always sighing
The sun shines, after all.

It is always morning somewhere,
And the sun shines always, too,
No matter how thick the mists are,
The white light filters through.

You can never find a shadow
Unless the bright sun shines,
While the cloud that hides its glory
Is edged with his silver lines.

No matter,—the clouds will gather,
But they always have flown away,
No trouble can last forever,
For the brightness of heaven doth stay.

To M—— S——

The Autumn rain drips drearily,
The Autumn leaves fall wearily,
The saddest days are here,
Within, the fire burns cheerily,
Men's hearts are beating merrily
My heart, what do we here?

Ah! well do I remember
The chilling, drear December
Of many a happy year;
Ere love, the weak dissembler,
Had burned to heatless ember
And crushed the heart so dear.

I mourn no vanished pleasure,
Though sorrow fills the measure,
Of my sojourning here.
I'll bear the burden stoutly,
Seek the great end devoutly,
And find my treasure there.

Christmas Carol—1900

We hear the joyous bells to-day,
The merry bells across the snow;
The heavy shadows fall away
Which held the world long years ago.

The wreathing centuries grow apace;
The Christ-light burns with steady glow,
Our chiming pulses feel the grace
Which throbs in bells across the snow.

The angels crowd the doors of light,
Their voices chiming sweet and low;
Beating across the fields of night
Since Christ appeared long years ago.

The night still rings with accents sweet;
The night stars burn with ruddier glow;
The larger Christ to-day you meet
Than Christmas brought long years ago.

"I live for you, I banish night,"
Like silver bells across the snow,
"In me is life. In me is light,
I brought you these long years ago."

The Old Year and the New

Every End Is a Beginning

Once more Old Time with trembling hand
Unbars the silent tomb,
Where dead years lie in some drear land
Amid eternal gloom,—
Time's first born in the night is dying.

From out ten thousand towers, the bells
Bid dark-robed hours adieu,
And herald through their wild farewells
The birth-pangs of the new,—
Time's last-born in our arms is lying.

A Thanksgiving Hymn

For bounteous showers of early Spring,
For Summer's fields of ripening grain,

For Autumn's harvests, Lord, we bring
Our grateful thanks in songs of Praise.

Thou hast ordained the showers to fall,
The gracious sun his work fulfil,
A rich abundance crowneth all
The mandates of Thy sovereign will.

Thou hast preserved our goodly land
From foes without and fears within,
While Christian love on every hand
Has fought the mighty tides of sin.

Accept our thanks, our Father, Friend,
Hear Thou our prayer, that still thy hand
May lead us to our journey's end
And make a better, nobler land.

In the White Hills

Now once again with fancy warm
I climb the White Hills' mountain path,
Where winter's winds and April's storm
Have wrought in beauty, or in wrath.
The cloud topped summits dim afar
As fainter grows the sunset's dye,
Till the last blue and golden bar
Fades in a shadow 'cross the sky.

I rest within a camp, beneath
The gloaming forest's clustered throng,
I drink the fir tree's balmy breath,
I hear the mountain's prophet song.
Above, the storm gods chant their vows,
And call their mightiest thunders forth,
The wind's weird spectres knit their brows
Sounding the trumpets of the North.

. . . . .

I walk the aisles where storm has trod,
The winds are hushed, the shadows pass,
My soul stands face to face with God,
In temples unrestrained by glass.
No bell rings out its anthem clear
To wake the sabbath midst the hills.
For God has sought His temple there
And God Himself the temple fills.

Above these hills my feet would climb,
Where midnight meets eternity,
And pours a melody on time,
Which ne'er was sung, and ne'er will be.—
See pictures flash and fade again
Which neither power nor prayer can bind,
Each melting from the earth-born train,
To fill the treasures of the mind.

If weary hearts could kneel and taste
  This wakening draught at nature's shrine,
See in the temple, uneffaced,
  The impress of the hand divine;
They, here before the doors of light
  'Neath roof of living flame impearled,—
In health and harmony could write,
  The language of another world.

WHO?

Who will be near me when the last sands flowing,
  Hint at the mighty change that comes to all?
Who will be near me when the film doth thicken,
  And the spent eyelids for the last time fall?

Who will be near me when the pulse is failing
  And the worn heart beats faint and fainter still?
Who on their loved bosom then will hold me
  As the tired feet shall journey down the hill?

Who will be near me when the shadows thicken
  And the dim twilight gathers, cold and gray?

Whose voice shall cheer me in the valley's darkness,
Whose hand shall lead me to that brighter day?

I hear a murmur in the gathering twilight,
It is the Muzziem's gentle call to prayer;
I go alone, alone to meet love's answer,
The voice is His, a wounded hand is there.

A Christmas Carol—1869

We hear the bells of heaven ring,
Again we hear the angels sing,
The starry hosts take up the strain,
And earth repeats the glad,—Amen.

Years upon years have rolled away
Since, speeding on their joyful way
The chanting angels bore the strain
To shepherds on Judea's plain.

'Tis midnight and the shepherds fear
The glorious conclave drawing near;
But "glory to God," they hear them sing,
As on they speed with glistening wing;
"Peace be on earth," they hear again
United with, "Good will to men."

A star in Eastern skies doth shine,
The wise men mark its rays divine,
Which leads to Bethlehem the way
Where in the Kahn the Saviour lay.
There did it rest, as round His head
Its purest radiance was shed.
They hail the child, they here behold
The one by prophets sung of old;
With precious gifts and incense rare
They leave him to his mother's care.

Years rolled along. To man he grew;
Filled with such power as earth ne'er knew,
For in His heavenly Father's name
He raised the dead, restored the lame;
The leper by His word stood free,
And at His touch the blind can see;
The suffering ones forgot their pain,
The palsied found new life again.

To man He made Himself akin;
For man He bore his load of sin,
The garden saw the tempter's power,
The cross proclaimed His triumph hour;
No king's crown His head adorns,
They plaited him a crown of thorns.
To save mankind He yielded up His breath
And laid Him down in the cold arms of death.

Eternity's broad sea has now no gloom;
Man has a saviour there. Beyond the tomb
He stands today, to cheer the pilgrim on,
To fairer fields, to crowns of glory won,
By those who, trusting Him as on they go
Shall emulate His precepts here below.

Lines to a Friend on Her Wedding Day

Standing at the mountain's base,
  Where two pearly streams unite,
Each into the other blending,
  Limpid, sparkling, pure and bright,
Thence together, onward roving
  Through the shadow, through the sheen,
Past fair banks in flower and fruitage,
  Past fair fields forever green.

Learn the lessons these will teach thee,
  Let them in thine heart abide,
Lesson first the mountain mingling,
  Lesson last, the ebb-less tide.
Every drop a fleeting moment,
  Use them ere their beauty fade,
'Gainst these moments, in the balance
  Will your earthly life be weighed.

"Little foxes spoil the vineyard,"
Little words of love will win,
Little deeds will help them heavenward,
Little checks will keep from sin.
Heaven is great by little children,
Loving, holy, life, if made
'Gainst a store of golden moments
In the balance will be weighed.

If you gather up the sunshine
That is spread along your path,
You will find the harvest fruited,
You will find but little chaff.
Jesus leads you, you can follow,
Every foot-print He has made,
Then, how sweet if found, "not wanting,"
In the Father's balance weighed?

To "Codie," December 31st, 1909

Tonight you shake hands with the past,
Bid pains and joys alike adieu,
Tomorrow's door, wide open cast,
Calls to a future, sweet and new.

With what bright joys your year has blest,
Build fairer mansions for the New;
Love fills the pathway into rest,
His hand shall daily lead you through.

Turning, oh! New Year, thus to thee,
My heart shall all dear memories keep;
Like some sweet sea-shell from the sea,
Filled with the music of the deep.

What Then

(The first three stanzas are a recollection; the last one is original.)

I am growing old, you say;
What then! What then!
Wrinkles mark my brow to-day;
Well! What then!
If the heart is just as young
As it was when first I sung
Childhood's sunny vales among;
Well! What then?

I am growing old, you say;
What then! What then?
And my laugh has grown less gay;
Well, what then?
If the stream no bubble knows,
If the tide in silence flows,
If the ripple seeks repose;
Well, what then?

I shall soon be called away,
What then? What then?
And the summons must obey;
Well, what then?
If the mists have left the vales,
And upborne by favoring gales,
Higher up to heaven sail;
Well! What then?

When I cross the shadowed vale,
What then! What then?
And the morning sunlight hail,
Well! What then?
When the Angel's grand Amen
Breaks the solemn silence then,
And I meet my loved again,
Well! What then?

Withered Leaves

I lay me down tonight without a thought or care
If the coming of tomorrow's light
Shall find me here, or there,—
My wearied head seeks only rest,
Deep in the cool earth's silent breast.
The morning hours are past; alas, so soon!
I do not like the burning heat of noon.

Life's fitful fever ebbs,—I have done all my part,
I give a patient God, a sinful heart.
His banner, low I've trailed. Its stars are dim;
Nothing but withered leaves I bring to Him;
Though withered, dead and dry,—just like my heart;
I'll lay them at His feet ere I am bid depart.

Fragment for an Article on the Rhine

Go not, my son, to the dashing Rhine,
To my word you may well give heed,
For life on its banks hath a flavor too fine—
Days pass with too fatal a speed.

The water sprite lurks in the depths of the stream,
Beware, if upon thee she smiles,
Shun the Lurlei's pale lips, and her eyes' fevered gleam,
And the ravishing song which beguiles.

Her songs will bewitch thee, her beauty enthrall,—
Fear and rapture entangle thee sore,—
If still, "To the Rhine," is your answer to all;
Then homeward thou com'st never more.

To Nell

It is only a "scrap of paper"
My dear little cousin Nell,
But 'twill serve the present purpose
To show that we love you well.

'Tis a day unkissed by sunshine.
The sky is a leaden gray;
And the winter, wrapped in a misty veil
Is weeping its life away.

We note through the drizzling rainfall
How the snow-banks disappear
And long for the promised spring-time,
When life shall burgeon here.

And the flowers will come in May days
And laugh 'neath the April suns,
But no springtime dawns on the 70's,
Nor blooms to the aged ones.

And the mind runs back to the early days,
Through many a yester-year,
When life was bold in high emprize,
With never a dream of tear.

But the way ran down through a valley,
The path was not always clear;
We climbed many hills of sorrow
And swam mighty rivers of fear.

But the song my heart keeps singing
As we near the silver strand,
Of the rest and the love and the sunshine
Of our promised springtime land.

So I know that youth will bloom again
When the weariness all is done,
In flowers and song on the hills of God
In the peace of the battle won.

So I send you this simple poem
In lack of a better thing,
And ask you to dream as I do now,
Of love and Eternal Spring.

FRED.

BETTER DAYS

Beautiful days in the future,
Darling, for you and me,
Touched with the radiant glory
Of a sunset on the sea.

Storm-clouds darkly gather;
Dearest, they soon will fly;
Fiercely the waves are dashing,
The calm come by and by.

Rough is the path we are treading,
Darling, for you and me,
But the end of the day is brighter,
The evening brings us home.

The Ebbing Tide

Some day when the tide is ebbing,
As the sun sinks low in the west,
I will loose my boat from its moorings
And sail to the land of rest.
Perhaps there are none who will miss me
Of the craft in the busy bay,
But out through the purple shadows,
Alone I will sail away.

O'er the tides of an unknown ocean,
Through the gates of the setting sun
To the mystic isle,—where anchored fast
Are my loved,—who the port have won.
In the hush of the crimson twilight
Some soul whom my heart holds dear,
May catch the dip of the parting sail
And in sorrow will drop a tear.

So—just as the mists of evening
Hide my boat from those in the bay,
Unseen by all but my pilot,
I will silently sail away.

But if,—when I slip the mooring
You should learn I return no more,
You may know I am sailing the unknown sea
In search of an unknown shore.

Revisited

I stood beside the river
Where I stood so long ago:
Since,—full half a hundred years
Have watched its silent flow.
Its banks, still willow-whitened,
As on that distant day,
They seem forever changeless,
But the waters,—where are they?

I sat in the fading twilight
By the cottage 'neath the hill,
And wondered if they missed me,
Or if they loved me still.
And I listened for the music
That I heard in childhood's play,
But 'twas only silence answered;
The others,—where are they?

Then I watched the golden sunset
From the summit of the hill.

But the voices and the bird's song
And the river, all were still;
And I called from out the shadows
For the hearts that once were true,
Only echo answered sadly,
It was you they never knew.

And so, the river flowing
To its tomb within the sea,
Is like the outcast wanderer
Or, so it seemed to me;
Each drop will fall forgotten
'Midst its flashing leagues of foam,
But no heart will ask the question,
Has the outcast found a home?

So! My life is like the river
In its half a hundred years;
One wanders off forever,
And forever disappears.

The Connecticut River

Oh, laughing, joyous river!
Oh, sun-filled, singing river!
Thy silvery willows quiver
In the sunlight as of old;

They shiver in the silence
Of the lowlands and the highlands
While the sunbars and the sandbars
Fill the air and waves with gold.
Oh, gentle, flowing river!
Oh, silent, gliding river!
Thy silver wavelets quiver
In the sunsets as of old;
There, when the moon has risen,
Thy flashing waters glisten,
And the hearts of lovers listen,
As the old, sweet tale is told.

After

The violets above my rest
  Will blossom sweetly blue,
  And raindrops filter through
Upon my breast.

The sunshine from above
  Your cursing heedeth not,
  Nor I,—but of my lot
Speak kindly, love.

Your partial judgment keep
  Until this life shall end,
  Then mark my foot-steps trend,
Judge when I sleep.

The Sunken City

I have heard a wondrous story
Of a city, sunk in the sea;
O'er its lost and ancient story
The winds and the waves sweep free;
But at even we hear its bells achime
With the wild sweet songs of the olden time.

There are domes and templed towers,
Unseen in their ocean grave;—
But when the sunset its glory pours
Through the scintillant, restless wave,
The waters are filled with a sad, sweet rhyme
As they chant the tale of the olden time.

And the name of that wondrous city,
Is! the "Home of Vanished Years."
And we speak of its ravishing beauty,
Through mingled smiles and tears;
But the songs we knew, now nobody sings;
But they live in memory's mystic cells.

And the name of that wondrous city,—
Let us call it, "Long Ago";
And dream of its fadeless beauty,
Through the sunset's dying glow;
But eternity holds in memory's shrine,
The sweet, sad songs of the olden time.

Shadows That I've Picked Up

I sat one night by my glowing fire
Which played o'er a rug of Persian dyes;
When I noted a rare and beautiful thing
That fluttered and flamed like the Orient skies.
I stooped to gather the beautiful thing,
And hollowed my hand like a waiting cup;
I held it down with a winning grace,
But, 'twas only a shadow that I picked up.

The dream of my youth was a maiden fair,—
I clasped to my heart and believed her true;
But a shadow fell on the vision sweet
I have chased my phantoms,—and so have you.
For a maiden's heart is a mystical thing,
And the dreams of youth are an empty cup;
The man with the pocket of gold wins out,—
'Twas only a shadow that I picked up.

By ways of danger and hopes sublime
I called men out to a broader view;
I won them by voice and book and pen
To a higher path and to visions new,
But they laughed and sneered at what might be;
Their lips returned to their feverish cup;

So,—ever and ever the trust was vain:
It was only a shadow that I picked up.

So this is the tale our lives will tell;
However fair the promises be;
Strive as we will 'gainst the things which seem,
Most is a shadow to you and me.
And after the struggle and toil of years
What have we left from life's deep cup?
Its reals and its visions, its hopes and tears
Are a bundle of shadows that we've picked up.

Compensation

It is always morning somewhere,
And the sun shines always too;
No matter how thick the mists are,
The white light filters through

The clouds are not always flying,
The rain does not always fall;
The winds are not always sighing,
The sun shines after all.

You can never have a shadow
Unless the bright sun shines;
And the cloud that hides his glory
Is edged with his silver lines.

No matter!—the clouds will gather,
But they always have flown away;
No trouble will last forever,
This too shall pass away.

Our Jesu

Our Jesus, source of life and light,
Saviour Divine;
Lead us, we pray, to know Thy Truth,
To do Thy will;
To keep Thy way.

O Holy Spirit; Cleansing power,
Give us Thy love—
In every sin-touched heart abound,
Till self-stained souls
In life be found.

The Bethlehem Star

Star on the bosom of the night,
Shine out afar, o'er hill and dell;
With visions blest, the heavens are light!
And filled with joy ineffable.
The angels chant through midnight air;
The clouds seraphic faces show;
While feet of seers, o'er mountains fair
Are hastening where thy beauties glow.

Star on the bosom of the East,
My soul would follow from afar;
No shade can dim thy glorious light,
It sets life's portals wide ajar.
Above the broad world's temple gate
All eyes may see the Christ-star glow;
Earth's mightiest empires thee await,
E'en death, thy triumph yet shall know.

Let all earth's raptured choirs sing;
Let organs peal the heart's desire;
Let happy voices hail their king;
To deeds of love the soul aspire.
Chime on then! all ye Christmas bells;
Ring out the night. Ring in the morn;
Shine on! Shine on, O star that tells
To all the world that Christ is born.

Companionship

I'm never quite alone;
Around each step I find
Of the Eternal mind
Some presence thrown.

Though not in all my heart
Yet ever near is He;
No loneliness I see;
We never dwell apart.

Though severed far from men,
In mountain solitude,
Or far from earthly good,
He's with me then.

The great God Heart is nigh
To cheer me in my walk;
He fills the way with talk
As heaven high.

The Great Forever

Part of an Easter Sermon. Adapted from the Oriental, Brahma

Thou shalt stand in the great Forever,
And bathe in the ocean of truth;
Thou shalt bask in the golden sunshine
Of fadeless love and truth.

And God shall be in and around thee,
All good is forever thine;
For, to all who seek it is given
And it comes by a law divine.

Brahma.

. . . . .

From the deathless glory of spirit,
That knoweth no blight nor fall;
From the immortal fires of Heaven
To the plains of Earth I call!

Come, stand in the Great Forever,
Where all things become divine;
Come, eat of the heavenly manna,
And drink of the new-made wine.

In the gleam of the shining rainbow,
The Father's love to behold;
Then master the radiant blending,
Of crimson and blue and gold.

In the glorious tints of the morning,
As you rise from the depths of night
The senses are lost in rapture,
And the soul is drowned in light.

They tell us we only are mortal,
And like others we too must die;
But the mighty life of the Spirit
Proclaims it; and death I defy.

Are we born but to die? Ah! Never;
The Easter-tide floods like the sea;
We stand in the Great Forever,
O! God, we are one with Thee.

With God to be one and forever;
With Thee, by the Easter-tide birth;—
The Celestial choirs shall proclaim it,
To the uttermost bounds of earth.

With you,—in the great forever,—
Oh! Children of earth! to stand;
While its light, flowing out like a river,
Shall bless and redeem the land.

Then gaze through the dawn of morning;
Or dream 'neath the stars of night;
But bow thine head to the blessing—
The wonderful gift of Light.

Oh! the glory and joy of living!
To know that with God we are one;
'Tis the armour of might to the spirit,
The blossom that welcomes the sun.

Thus to stand in the Great Forever,
With Thee as eternities roll;
The Spirit forsaking us never,
Thy Love the true Home of the soul.

Springtime

An Imitation —

The Spring comes from the Southland,
I know it is pleasant there;
For all the flowers are dreaming,
On the drowsy, perfumed air.

But, someway all the heart of me,
The strongest, tenderest part of me,
Is longing for the mountains,
And is sighing to be there.

The Springtime draweth nearer—
And O! The Spring is fair,
She glories in her radiance;
No days with her compare;—
But somehow, still the soul of me,
Gets quite beyond control of me,
And I'm crying to be flying,
Where the sunset mountains are.

The Springtime buds are bursting,
For now the Spring is here;
The sunlit days we longed for,—
The promise of the year.
But, O! the wandering mind of me,
Perhaps you think it blind of me,
Is yearning for the mountains,
Where my heart is free from care.

Night at Sea

Night falls upon the restless deep,
Our steel prow parts the phosphor glow,
While silver flash of spray reveals,
The seething, yielding path below.

We hear old ocean's storm strung harp
  Touched by the sea-king's fingers light,
While winds through all the throbbing strings
  Pour forth their psalm upon the night.

Like sculptured hills the waves arise;
  And then, like melting mountains fall,
Then, rushing down in clamorous might,
  They wrap us in their vapory pall.

And still the burning heart beats on;
  Through storm and night—o'er trackless foam,
'Till, through the waning mists of night
  The searching eyes discern their home.

Christmas Bells

Again the Christmas bells are ringing,
  Pulsing with harmonies soft and low;
Ever the Old Sweet Story bringing,
  Heard by the shepherds, long ago.

Judean hill-sides, drowsily sleeping
  Under the moonlight's silvery glow,
Heard on the night winds, tenderly creeping,
  Wonderful anthems, long ago.

Glory to God! They are angels singing;
Good will to men! is the strong refrain;
Over the broad earth, still it is ringing;
Bells are repeating it yet again.

Happy the heart where Christ-bells are ringing;
Sweet are their harmonies, soft and low;
Love and good will; they are evermore bringing;
The angel's sweet message of long ago.

The Sons of Freedom

As the lion of the desert
Springs fiercely from his lair
And gazes down the distance
With fixed and fiery glare,
As the bolt along the storm cloud
Trembles with fierce unrest
Ere it bursts with triple vengeance
On earth's rent and quivering breast;
E'en so, the sons of freedom
For one dreadful moment stand,
Till a traitorous hand uplifted
Strikes at their native land.

New England's hills will echo
The warrior's battle cry,

New York's excelsior banner,
Mid shoutings kiss the sky,—
From the Southland's lakes and rivers;
O'er the distant prairie's breast;
O'er true souled Pennsylvania,
And the bold, unfettered West,
Like the roar of the mountain torrent,
Like the shriek of the tempest comes,
God and our country ever,
Our banners and our homes.

We Are Coming, Coming, Teddy

We are coming, coming, Teddy;
All "our hats are in the ring,"
With the boys of five-and-twenty falling in?
We have heard the nations calling
For our help from o'er the sea;
And their freedom, with you leading, we will win.

We are coming, coming, Teddy;
Don't you hear the bugles play?
See the boys of Santiago falling in?
We will follow 'neath the banner
Of the glorious stripes and stars,
Till the freedom of the nations we will win.

We are coming, coming, Teddy;
  Don't you see the pennons dance?
O'er the Yankee boys of freedom falling in?
  And the stars and stripes shall flutter
  On the sunny fields of France,
In the name of God and Country we will win.

Chorus

We are coming, coming, Teddy;
  All our stars are on the blue;
While the sun is shining on each crimson bar;
  We will save the sons of France,
  With Old England, strong and true,
And on Freedom's banner plant another star.

A Poem

Delivered at a Meeting of the Alumni of Deerfield Academy December 12, Eighteen Hundred and Seventy-two

If it were only in rhymes, my President friend,
  That strains of joy and sorrow blend,
It were happier far, this world of ours,
  With its glowing sunshine, birds and flowers;
Then the longing heart would no more see
  Its ships go wandering over the sea.

How often we sit on some quiet shore
On whose shining sands the waters play,
And watch and dream, as the sun goes down,
Of the white sails gleaming far away;
And we muse of one we sent away;
A beautiful ship, and fair, Ah me!
But she tarries long, and the heart grows faint
As we wait for her coming from over the sea.

Last night I sat on the headland height,
Which runs far out in our quiet bay,
And watched the sun as he went from sight
To kiss the lips of the dying day.
And just as he touched the wavelet's crest
A phantom ship, it seemed to me,
Clear, mirrored within his golden breast,
And I thought it was my ship from over the sea.

Her hull was made of the purest pearl,
Her masts and spars of the coral tree;
She sailed away from her golden port,
And I thought her course was set for me.
But her form grew dimmer as night drew on,
And in the distance her hull sank low,
But voices arose from her fading decks
Which whispered her name,—'twas Long Ago.

The song which they sang floated out o'er the tide
'Till it reached my ear on the shore,
And my heart went back through the fading years
To the days we shall see no more.
But the waves began singing another song,
A happier, livelier strain,
And the burden they bore as they reached the shore,
Was—to-morrow they come again.

My heart was light, and I sang a song,
In my happiness, freed from pain,
And perhaps, if I make it not too long,
You would like to hear the refrain.

And so, we gather, one and all,
To thank him and to cheer him,
To tell him that our hopes and prayers
Forever will be near him.

And though to meet again on earth,
To us may not be given,
We'll pray our band will meet at last,
Unbroken, safe in heaven.——

Then, out from the bay with her white sails set,
Blithesome and free as a bird on the wing,

My ship sails out o'er the billory main,
And I listen to catch the last strain they sing.
The years may come, and the years may go,
Some with sorrow and some with glee,
But I mourn no more for my beautiful ship
As she wanders on to the outer sea;—
For a million sails on the billows shine,
There are many fairer, but none like mine,
Sailing out to the sea of eternity.

The Close of a Farewell Sermon

And now, farewell;
If thoughts among you dwell of higher life,
A sense of pardoned sin,—of strength and courage
For the onward march,—then, not in vain
I've borne the pilgrim staff, the scallop shell,
Farewell.

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